

June 9, 2008

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi

Speaker of the House

H232 Capitol

Washington, DC 20515

Dear Madam Speaker:

Last week, I wrote to you seeking your assistance in accepting a critical, one year extension of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (Secure Rural Schools) in the Senate-passed version of H.R. 2642, the war supplemental appropriations bill for FY 2008. I write to you today to bring to your attention the Administration's apparent acceptance on inclusion of this one year reauthorization in the war supplemental.

According to high level Administration officials, the Administration will not oppose or issue a veto threat on the bill if a one year reauthorization of Secure Rural Schools is included in the supplemental. This position is contingent on not including full mandatory funding of the payments-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILT) program in the bill, and with the understanding that the \$400 million in the supplemental for Secure Rural Schools is the first year in any multi-year reauthorization that begins to ramp down spending on the program. The Administration's Statement of Administrative Policy on HR 3058, the Public Land Communities Transition Act, which is a four year reauthorization of Secure Rural Schools, contained a similar statement, so I have good reason to believe that the Administration will be amenable to the Senate's language.

The Secure Rural Schools program aids over 600 rural counties and 4,400 school districts in 42 states. These counties are again facing the prospects of closing libraries, laying off county employees, curtailing sheriffs patrols, releasing prisoners from jails, ceasing search and rescue operations, eliminating mental health care services, and some are considering declaring bankruptcy and giving up their county status. Reauthorizing the Secure Rural Schools program will ensure that rural school children continue to have access to a quality education, libraries remain open, and public safety is guaranteed.

Thank you again for your invaluable assistance in reauthorizing the critically important Secure Rural Schools program in the past, and I look forward to continuing to work with you in the very near future to bring this process to a close.

Sincerely,

Peter DeFazio

Member of Congress